

#STOPEACOP

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, December 8th, 2023**

StopEACOP Alarmed by Further Remand of Seven Ugandan Youth Activists Jailed for Opposing Pipeline

Kampala, Uganda — This morning, the seven Ugandan youth activists imprisoned for petitioning parliament to halt the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) faced further remand until December 19th because the magistrate failed to show up at Buganda Road Court. This extension of their unjust detention comes as a shock.

On November 24th, Ssekandi Eric, Wafula Simon, Sean Denbo Tevin, Kabuza John, Nuwagaba Oscar, Sanya Ivan Lewis, and Kayanga Ashiraf were arrested for peacefully urging political leaders to cancel EACOP on climate grounds. After four days in police custody, they were remanded to Luzira Maximum Security Prison when the initial hearing on November 29th proceeded without the prosecutor.

Today was expected to be the activists' opportunity to contest grounds for imprisonment. However, after lawyers and supporters waited at Buganda Road Court, the 9 AM session was adjourned due to the absent magistrate. The Constitutional right to apply for bail was denied, forcing the students to remain imprisoned until the next scheduled hearing on 19th December.

This absence of due process mirrors the bullying also underway in Buliisa district, where 42 households are being coerced into forfeiting land to make way for TotalEnergies' Tilenga oil development. After these families dismissed inadequate compensation and refused to vacate their property, the Ugandan government [resorted to forceful lawsuits](#), pressurizing displacement - consistent with the climate of intimidation enabling EACOP, according to the recent [Global Witness investigation](#). Even as the seven students are denied their day in court, project-affected people see their land rights and just treatment disregarded in the government's ruthless push to operationalize oil projects with corporate partners.

Quotes

"Total's CEO, Patrick Pouyanné, has been captured on video on Tuesday this week making a personal commitment to call for the release of these young student activists. Yet, to date, we have not seen any public statement or any update on the steps they have taken. All the

#STOPEACOP

while, the Ugandan government continues to crack down on defenders for their opposition to EACOP. We must call a spade a spade. The ongoing detention of these students is an attempt to squash local resistance to EACOP and intimidate land, human rights and environmental defenders”, said Zaki Mamdoo, StopEACOP Campaign Coordinator.

“My fellow students are paying an unjust price for civic participation. Their courtroom absence today due to sheer negligence again denies due process. They must be freed now or released on bail at once. Silencing dissent benefits no one.”, said Nkurunziza Alphonse, student activist leader.

“This absent magistrate has undermined court proceedings, further infringing on rights and wasting time for the students who were jailed unfairly. Such failures at basic judicial function are inexcusable.”, said Lawyer Brighton Aryampa.

“We are disturbed by the further postponement of a fair hearing for these young activists who sought to petition leaders peacefully. This is unacceptable; the judiciary shouldn't be used to promote injustice or break activists' spirits. Article 126(2)(b) of the constitution provides that justice shall not be delayed. Justice delayed is justice denied.”, said Samuel Okulony, Director at the Environment Governance Institute Uganda.

“We strongly condemn the Ugandan judiciary's weaponization against these climate advocates simply exercising democratic rights. Postponing their hearing shows a blatant disregard for proper process, further silencing legitimate concerns over EACOP. These promising students should be admired for civic participation, not criminalized. We call for all charges against the activists to be unconditionally dropped and for their immediate release. This case spotlights the repression of land and environmental defenders opposing the oil pipeline in Uganda - precisely the human rights dialogue needed to be uplifted at the ongoing COP28 climate summit. As Global Witness proves, TotalEnergies is directly involved in this repression, and has to be held accountable: TotalEnergies' oil is blood oil”, said Nicolas Haeringer, Associate Director at 350.org.

###

Notes to Editors:

For media inquiries, please contact:
Abiud Onyach

#STOPEACOP

StopEACOP Digital and Communications Associate
abiud.onyach@350.org | info@stopeacop.net

Brighton Aryampa
Youth for Green Communities (YGC)
aryampa.brighton@gmail.com

About StopEACOP

StopEACOP is a global campaign against constructing the East African Crude Oil pipeline (EACOP). This proposed 1,443-kilometer heated pipeline will transport oil from Hoima, Uganda, to the port of Tanga in Tanzania. An alliance of local groups, communities, and African and global organisations leads the campaign. The #StopEACOP Coalition calls for a stop to the proposed pipeline and associated oil fields at Tilenga and Kingfisher. The #StopEACOP campaign is gathering momentum, building pressure on the remaining supporters and financiers of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline. AEGIS London, Arch Capital Group Ltd and Britam Holdings recently announced they would not offer the project insurance coverage. So far, 27 major banks and 23 major (re)insurers have ruled out support for the pipeline. Some key financial institutions yet to commit to not funding EACOP include ICBC and Standard Bank.